WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   1.   A method for accessing information in a peer to peer network
2. comprising:
3.   storing information among a plurality of peer client systems, wherein the
4. information can be accessed by the peer client systems, the information collectively referred
5. to as information sources;
6.   storing location information, the location information indicative of the location
7. of each information source, wherein peer client systems can access the location information
8. in order to determine a location of an information source;
9.   generating one or more subscriptions, each subscription being associated with
10. an information source and with one or more peer client systems;
11.   detecting a modification to an information source, referred to as a modified
12. information source; and
13.   if there is a subscription that is associated with the modified information
14. source, then communicating an alert message to each peer client system that is associated
15. with the subscription,
16.   wherein each peer client system that receives an alert message can access an
17. information source that is associated with the alert message, a copy of the information source
18. being stored in another peer client system,
19.   wherein each peer client system that receives an alert message can access the
20. copy from the other peer client system.

1.   2.   The method of claim 1 wherein a copy of the information source is
2. stored in a plurality of second peer client systems, wherein each peer client system that
3. receives an alert message can access the copy from any of the second peer client systems.

1.   3.   The method of claim 1 wherein the steps of:
2.   storing location information is performed in a first server system, the peer
3. client systems communicating with the first server system to access the location information;
4.   generating one or more subscriptions is performed in a second server system,
5. the peer client systems communicating with the second server system to subscribe to one or
6. more information sources; and

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7   detecting a modification to an information source comprises communicating to

8   the first server system an indication that a first information source has been modified and

9   communicating to the second server information relating to the first information source,

10   wherein the second server determines if there is a first subscription that is

11   associated with the first information source, and in response thereto communicates an alert

12   message to each peer client system that is associated with the first subscription.

1   4.   The method of claim 3 wherein one of the peer client systems that

2   receives the alert message automatically accesses an information source that is associated

3   with the alert message.

1   5.   The method of claim 1 wherein the steps of:

2   storing location information is performed in a first server system, the peer

3   client systems communicating with the first server system to access the location information;

4   generating one or more subscriptions is performed in the first server system,

5   the peer client systems communicating with the first server system to subscribe to one or

6   more information sources; and

7   detecting a modification to an information source comprises receiving from a

8   first peer client system an indication that a first information source has been modified,

9   wherein if the first server determines that there is a first subscription that is associated with

10   the first information source, then communicating to the first peer client system a list of

11   second peer client systems that are associated with the first subscription,

12   wherein the first peer client communicates an alert message to each second

13   peer client system.

1   6.   The method of claim 5 wherein one of the second peer client systems

2   automatically accesses an information source that is associated with the alert message.

1   7.   The method of claim 5 wherein the first information source is modified

2   by the first client system.

1   8.   The method of claim 1 wherein the steps of:

2   storing location information comprises each peer client system storing location

3   information of one or more of the information sources;

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4 generating one or more subscriptions is performed in a server system, the peer

5 client systems communicating with the server system to subscribe to one or more information

6 sources; and

7 detecting a modification to an information source comprises communicating to

8 the server system an indication that a first information source has been modified, wherein if

9 the server determines there is a first subscription that is associated with the first information

10 source, then communicating an alert message to each peer client system that is associated

11 with the first subscription.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the steps of:

2 storing location information comprises each peer client system storing location

3 information of one or more of the information sources;

4 generating one or more subscriptions is performed by each peer client system

5 and comprises receiving a subscription request from a first peer client and associating one or

6 more information sources with the first peer client, the one or more information sources

7 identified in the subscription request; and

8 detecting a modification to an information source is performed by each peer

9 client system and comprises receiving an indication that a first information source has been

10 modified and communicating an alert message to each peer client system that is associated

11 with the first subscription if there is a first subscription that is associated with the first

12 information source.

1 10. A peer to peer network for sharing information comprising:

2 a plurality of peer clients, each peer client in communication with other peer

3 clients, wherein each peer client stores information, collectively referred to as information

4 sources, wherein the information sources can be shared among the peer clients;

5 a management server having information indicative of locations of the

6 information sources, the management server configured to communicate with a peer client to

7 provide location information of an information source so that the peer client can access the

8 information source; and

9 a notification server in communication with the management server and

10 configured to receive from peer clients requests for subscriptions to one or more information

11 sources, each such information source referred to as a subscribed information source, and to

12 associate each subscribed information source with one or more peer clients,

13   the management server further configured to receive from the peer clients

14   information indicative of modifications made to one or more of the information sources, each

15   such information source referred to as a modified information source, and to communicate to

16   the notification server first information that identifies one or more of the modified

17   information sources,

18   the notification server further configured to identify one or more first peer

19   clients based on a comparison of the subscribed information sources and the first information,

20   and to communicate an alert message to each of the first peer clients,

21   wherein each first peer client, in response to receiving an alert message, can

22   access a first information source associated with the alert message, the first information

23   source being stored in one or more second peer client systems,

24   wherein each first peer client can access the first information source from any

25   of the one or more second peer client systems.

1   11.   The system of claim 10 wherein one of the first peer clients, in further

2   response to receiving an alert message, communicates with the management server to obtain

3   location information for the first information source.

1   12.   The system of claim 11 wherein one of the first peer clients, in further

2   response to receiving an alert message, presents information to a user indicative of receiving

3   the alert message so that the user can decide whether to access the first information source.

1   13.   The system of claim 11 wherein one of the first peer clients, in further

2   response to receiving an alert message, accessed the first information source automatically.

1   14.   A computer system for sharing information in a peer to peer network,

2   the computer system configured to:

3   communicate with a management server to obtain location information for an

4   information source, the location information being associated with another peer client;

5   communicate with the other peer client to obtain information relating to the

6   information source;

7   communicate with a notification server to subscribe to one or more first

8   information sources;

9   receive an alert message from the notification server; and

10   in response to receiving the alert message, to communicate with the

11   management server to obtain first location information associated with one of the first

12   information sources and to communicate with the peer client that is associated with the first

13   location to access one of the first information sources.

1   15.   The computer system of claim 14 wherein the alert message includes

2   information that identifies one or more of the first information sources, referred to as the

3   modified information sources.

1   16.   The computer system of claim 15 wherein one or more of the modified

2   information sources is accessed automatically.

1   17.   The computer system of claim 15 wherein the computer system is

2   further configured to:

3   display information to a user that indicates receipt of the alert message,

4   including displaying information representative of the modified information sources;

5   receive an indication from the user of a selected one of the modified

6   information sources; and

7   access the selected one of the modified information sources.

1   18.   The computer system of claim 14 wherein the alert message includes

2   information that identifies a second information source, the computer system being further

3   configured to determine if the second information source is one of the first information

4   sources, and if so then to access the second information source.

1   19.   A system for sharing information in a peer to peer network comprising:

2   a plurality of peer clients, each peer client in communication with other peer

3   clients, wherein each peer client stores information, collectively referred to as information

4   sources, wherein the information sources can be shared among the peer clients; and

5   a management server having information indicative of locations of the

6   information sources, the management server configured to communicate with a peer client to

7   provide location information to an information source so that the peer client can access the

8   information source;

9   the management server further configured to receive requests from peer clients

10   for subscriptions to one or more information sources, each such information source referred

11   to as a subscribed information source, and to associate each subscribed information source

12   with one or more peer clients,

13   the management server further configured to receive information from a first

14   peer client indicative modifications made to one or more of the information sources, each

15   such information source referred to as a modified information source,

16   the management server further configured to identify one or more second peer

17   clients based on a comparison of the modified information source against the subscribed

18   information sources, and to communicate a list that identifies the second peer clients to the

19   first peer client,

20   wherein the first peer client can communicate an alert message to each of the

21   second peer clients,

22   wherein each second peer client, in response to receiving an alert message, can

23   access a first information source associated with the alert message.

1   20.   The system of claim 19 wherein one of the second peer clients

2   automatically accesses at least a first information source associated with the alert message.

1   21.   The system of claim 19 wherein one of the second peer clients

2   generates a display to inform a user of receipt of the alert message, wherein the user can

3   decide whether to access an information source associated with the alert messag.